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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0356
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0363
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0492
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0651
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1003
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002181

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#) [RS](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/GEORGIAN SEPARATIST REGIONS: ANKARA CANNOT
PROMISE CONVERGENCE WITH U.S. STRATEGY

REF: A. SECSTATE 134559

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1062

Classified By: Ambassador James Jeffrey, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador delivered ref A points to MFA Deputy U/S for Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Unal Cevikoz December 29, underscoring the importance of collective support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Cevikoz promised to analyze the U.S. strategy on Georgia's separatist regions carefully and to convey our points to FM Babacan and PM Erdogan. He said Turkey wants, "to the best of its ability," to converge with U.S. policy on Georgia's separatist regions, but that GOT implementation of similar measures would have serious consequences for the government, due to the strong influence of Turkish Circassian lobbies. "This will be more difficult for us than for any other state you are demarching." He noted the difficulty, in particular, of enforcing any travel ban on Abkhaz political leaders. He reminded the Ambassador that Abkhaz "FM" Shamba visited Turkey in June 2008 (ref B) and that Circassian diaspora groups are pushing the government hard to permit a visit to Turkey by "President" Bagapsh. If Turkey was to implement some of these sanctions it would likely have to do so "tacitly."

[1](#)2. (C) Cevikoz offered three immediate personal observations on the U.S. strategy. First, he opined that travel bans are not appropriate for "community leaders." Such bans -- similar to those implemented against leaders of de jure states, like Lukashenko in Belarus -- would effectively convey a political status on these individuals under international law. Second, he noted that proposals to offer incentives to help facilitate a rapprochement between Georgia and the separatist regions failed before August 7; Tbilisi was uninterested completely in what the Abkhaz and South Ossetians wanted. Third, sanctions could push the two regions even closer to Moscow. The separatists would prefer to suffer rather than gravitate back toward a Georgia punishing them through Western sanctions. Turkey, he reminded, has been interested in launching a ferry between Trabzon and Sukhumi to facilitate direct contact between Abkhazia and the West, which Turkey believes can help promote Abkhaz reintegration with Georgia. If something like this does not happen soon, Cevikoz said, the separatist regions will end up joining the Russian Federation.

13. (C) Ambassador stressed the need to sharpen the choice for separatist leaders, but underlined our intent to implement these measures flexibly, calibrating them to actions by the de facto leaders, and to design an incentives package that would promote negotiations and contacts between the separatists and Tbilisi toward the goal of reintegration. He promised to keep the GOT apprised of specific steps by the U.S. to implement these proposed measures. Cevikoz added his appreciation for our intent to keep in mind the Geneva process as we implement any sanctions, but cautioned that sanctions could cause that process to breakdown.

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Jeffrey